

What we claim is:

1. A composition for topical application to the skin comprising effective amounts of at least one protease inhibitor and at least one cell differentiation enhancer.

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2. The composition of claim 1 in which the protease inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of triterpenoid-containing extracts, and active components thereof, phenolic-containing extracts and active components thereof, and protein-based extract and active components thereof.

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3. The composition of claim 1 in which the protease inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of white birch extract, silver birch extract, *Boswellia* extract, bearberry extract, *Centella asiatica* extract, *Pygeum* (*Prunus*) *africanum* extract, betulinol, betulinic acid, boswellic acid, ursolic acid, oleanolic acid, oleanol, asiaticoside, asiatic acid, madagassic acid, green tea extract, apple extracts, EGCG, ECG, catechins, phenylpropanoids, phloretin, soy protein, egg protease inhibitors, cholesterol sulfate, phytosterol sulfate, and combinations thereof.

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4. The composition of claim 3 in which the protease inhibitor is selected from the group consisting of white birch extract, betulinol, betulinic acid, *Boswellia* extract, boswellic acid, and combinations thereof.

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5. The composition of claim 1 in which the cell differentiation enhancer is selected from the group consisting of forskolin, sclareolide, 7-dehydrocholesterol, and Vitamin D3 analogs.

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6. The composition of claim 5 in which the enhancer is sclareolide.

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7. The composition of claim ⁶~~1~~ comprising about .001 to about 10% of a protease inhibitor and about 0.001-10% cell differentiation enhancer.

5 8. The composition of claim 1 comprising about 0.1 to about 1% of a protease inhibitor and about .05-1% cell differentiation enhancer.

10 9. The composition of claim 8 in which the inhibitor is white birch extract, betulinol, or boswellic acid and the enhancer is sclareolide.

Sub 12

~~10. The composition of claim 1 which also contains cholesterol sulfate.~~

15 11. The composition of claim 10 which also contains at least one fatty acid, at least one ceramide, and at least one sterol.

20 12. The composition of claim 11 in which the fatty acid is a C12-C20 fatty acid.

13. The composition of claim 11 containing about 0.05 to 10% of each of cholesterol sulfate or phytosterol sulfate, fatty acid, ceramide, and sterol.

25 14. The composition of claim ~~1~~ which further comprises an effective amount of at least one self-tanning agent.

Sub 3

~~15. The composition of claim 14 in which the self-tanning agent is DHA.~~

16. The composition of claim ⁶~~1~~ which further comprises at least one sunscreen.

35 17. A method for treatment or prevention of dry skin which ⁶ comprises applying to the skin a composition according to claim ~~1~~.

18. A method for treatment or prevention of dry skin which comprises applying to the skin a composition according to claim 9.

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19. A method for treatment or prevention of dry skin which comprises applying to the skin a composition according to claim 11.

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20. A method for reducing or preventing skin's response to irritants or sensitizers comprising applying to the skin a composition of claim 11.

21. A method for reducing or preventing skin's response to irritants or sensitizers comprising applying to the skin a composition of claim 9.

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22. A method for reducing or preventing skin's response to irritants or sensitizers comprising applying to the skin a composition of claim 11.

23. A method for protecting skin against effects of exposure to UV radiation comprising applying to the skin a composition of claim 11.

24. A method for protecting skin against effects of exposure to UV radiation comprising applying to the skin a composition of claim 9.

25. A method for protecting skin against effects of exposure to UV radiation comprising applying to the skin a composition of claim 11.

26. A method for protecting skin against effects of exposure to UV radiation comprising applying to the skin a composition of claim 16.

27. A method for tanning the skin without exposure to the sun comprising applying to the skin a composition according to claim 14.

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5 28. A method for tanning the skin without exposure to the sun comprising applying to the skin a composition according to claim 15.

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